

KANSAS

Kansas State Historical Society
Cultural Resources Division

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

CERTIFICATION OF STATE REGISTER LISTING

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties, which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: Alfred M. Landon House
Address: 300 South 8th, Independence, KS 67301
County: Montgomery County

Owner(s): Independence Historical Museum
Address: PO Box 294, Independence, KS 67301

This nomination was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on November 18, 2006.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.



Patrick Zollner, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

11/20/06
Date

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Alfred M. Landon HouseOther name/site number The Landon Center; 125-2670-00009

2. Location

Street & number 300 South 8th☐ not for publicationCity or town Independence☐ vicinityState KansasCode KSCounty MontgomeryCode 125Zip code 67301

3.,4. Certification

I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Patricia J. Landon DSHPO11/20/06

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter Categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: STONE

Walls: WOOD: Weatherboard

Roof: ASPHALT

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the State Register)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☒ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☒ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1901-1937

Significant Dates

1901; 1915-1937

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Landon, Alfred

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Todd, A.E. (builder)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Independence Historical Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	Zone	Easting	Northing

3	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	Zone	Easting	Northing

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Norman Chambers

Organization Independence Historical Museum Date 4 October 2006

Street & number PO Box 294 Telephone (620) 331-1379

City or town Independence State KS Zip code 67301

Property Owner

Name Independence Historical Museum

Street & number PO Box 294 Telephone (620) 331-1379

City or town Independence State KS Zip code 67301

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 7 Page 1

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

SUMMARY

The Alfred Landon House (c. 1901) is a three-story Queen Anne home, built in 1901 by Independence contractor A. E. Todd. It is a representative example of a large turn-of-the-century Queen Anne with the usual broad gables and sloping roof. The house has 4,720 square feet of living space including two stairways, 10' ceilings on the first floor, three fireplaces, four full bathrooms, and a total of 62 windows.

Elaboration

The Landon House was moved from its original location in early 2005 to save it from demolition and to make way for a new Walgreen's retail store. Its original address was 300 East Maple Street, and was built in 1901. At the original location the house faced the east. After the move the house faces the west. The original location was on flat land. The new location is a sloping lot and the house sits higher from the street. The new address is 300 South 8th Street, two blocks from the original location. The new location is essentially the same neighborhood as the original location. The kitchen at the original location was a converted back porch. Sometime in the past the kitchen had been relocated from inside the house to the back porch addition. The kitchen (originally a back porch) had a cement floor and could not be moved with the house. The kitchen had an attached gabled roof and with the cement floor there was no way to brace the kitchen for the move without the floor. The kitchen was removed prior to the move. The original location included a carriage house that was not capable of being moved. A commercial moving company located in Kansas moved the house. Except for the kitchen the integrity of the house is intact.

The kitchen is being added back to the house at the new location. The original kitchen was approximately 10 x 20 feet. The replacement kitchen will be 16 x 24 feet with the same general roof-line as the original. The replacement kitchen will have modern appliances and be designed to support both caterers and in house food preparation. The original kitchen had a back door exiting from the end of the kitchen. The replacement kitchen will have a back door exiting out the back of the house on the east. The windows on the back (east) will be matching to the other windows of the house. The windows planned for the north end of the kitchen will be the standard width for the house but about ½ the length due to countertops and appliances in the kitchen.

The basic roof design is gable front and wing. The major gable line runs north and south and the lesser gable line makes a 90 degree from the west to east. There are fish scale shingles in the gables. There is a spire-roof dormer on the west side of the main roof with a single window with a finial at the top. On the east side of the main gable line is modified pyramidal style portion of the roof. This is over the back or east part of the house. To the north of the pyramidal roof sections is an area of flat roof covering the northeast section of the house. The roof has a built in gutter system that manages the water from the entire roof design. This system does not include the downspout requirements. There are many decorative cornices around north, west and south areas where the roof and walls come together.

The house currently faces the West and sits at an intersection of 8th and Magnolia streets. The front, or eastern, elevation is divided into an upper level and lower level by a one-story porch. The porch runs the full width of the front and wraps around and extends about half way to the east on the north side.

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 7 Page 2

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

The porch is supported by a series of 6 partly stone and wood columns. The wood columns are made of two round columns each except for the corner where the porch makes the wrap and the south end of the porch; these two sets are three each. The two column sets with three round wooden posts are positioned to appear to be pairs from the front and sides. The wooden porch columns are supported by simple bases and capitals. There are two sets of steps leading to the porch, one from the front, or east, consisting of 6 steps, and one from the north consisting of 5 steps. The column sets are positioned on each side of both sets of steps. The round wood columns are sitting on quaried stones that extend below the porch and are mounted on the cement footing that is part of the house foundation. The porch ceiling is of typical tongue-and-groove wood. A wooden railing runs between the stone and wood porch columns. Below the porch floor is a constructed lattice style covering that covers all the space between the porch floor and the ground. This lattice runs between the stone columns of the porch and between the stone columns and both sets of steps. The roof of the porch is low pitch that follows the porch wrap around the west and part of the north side of the house. Over each of the two sets of sandstone steps there is a pediment that focuses attention to the steps. Adjacent to the south end of the porch is a portico covering a ground level carriage stop. The porch roof pitch continues over to the south end of the portico. Although the portico roof becomes a gabled roof as it extends to the west to cover the entire portico. The south end of the portico is supported by quaried sandstone wall about 5 feet high. From the top of the sandstone rock wall there are two sets of round wood columns matching the earlier described porch columns that support the roof on the south end. This portico is open at the east and west ends. The portico sandstones were also located at the original house location. All along the eave line of the porch and portico are a series of dentils.

Both sets of steps are quaried sandstone that was part of the house at the original location. The steps are 6-8 feet wide providing expansive access to the house. The sidewalk on the north set of steps down to the city sidewalk is large sections of sandstone. Due to the elevation of the site, there are two steps as part of the sandstone walk. The sidewalk from the east (front) steps to the city sidewalk is also sandstone. Due to the drop in elevation from the steps to the city sidewalk, the sandstone sidewalk is installed in 6 single step drops about every 3-6 feet. The sandstone sidewalks were part of the sidewalks at the original location of the house.

The front façade of the house faces the west. There are two bays on this side. The front door is a large 40" x 8' door with a beveled glass for the upper half. Just inside is the grand foyer that leads to the living room or up the ornate wooden double back stairway. Next to the front door is a decorative side window. There are double pocket doors leading to the living room. The foyer has crown molding that is a reverse pattern of the top portion of the baseboard trim. This is true throughout the downstairs of the house. There is narrow oak flooring in the foyer.

The living room is a large spacious room with a fireplace at the east end with period tile hearth. At the east end of the room on the south wall is a set of pocket doors leading to the original dining room. There is an outside door on the north wall of the living room leading to the wrap around porch. The west wall of the living room is a bay-bow wall that curves out onto the porch. This bay wall has 3 matching double-hung windows. There is crown molding that is a reverse match to the upper portion of

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 7 Page 3

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

the baseboard trim. There are two additional double-hung windows in the living room. This room has a chair rail around the entire room. The floor is narrow oak.

The original dining room is to the south of the living room. The south wall is also a bay-bow curved wall with three matching double-hung windows. The term original is used because it has not been used as a dining room for many years. The crown molding is a reverse match to the upper portion of the baseboard trim. The floor is also of narrow oak. There is a full bath on the west wall with storage closet on both ends of the bathroom. These units have curved ceilings because the closets and bathroom are located under the main stairway. There is a door from the dining room leading to the butler's pantry.

The butler's pantry is immediately east of the dining room. Within this pantry are built-in storage on two sides, and the back stairway for the servants to be able to come and go to the third floor without passing through the main part of the house. There are two other doors in the pantry. One leads to the room that originally housed the kitchen to the north, and the other leads to the original stairway to the basement on the south. With move of the house there is no basement. The original stairway to the basement and the kitchen/porch that did not make the move are on the southeast corner of the house and will be part of a complete remodel that is planned to occur. There is an outside door on the south side of the house where the basement stairway landing was. As you leave the butler's pantry toward the east there is a door that leads to the current kitchen area that is being replaced on the east side of the house. This area where the basement stairway and landing were, plus the addition of the new kitchen is being planned to house the kitchen, a handicap accessible restroom, and a mechanical/storage room.

To the north of the butler's pantry and east of the living room is a large room that could be described as a sunroom. It has double-hung windows on three sides. There are five windows on the north, three on the east and three on the west looking out onto the wrap around porch. There is fireplace on the west wall that is back-to-back with the fireplace in the living room. The floors are of clear narrow oak. There is the same crown molding and baseboard trim as the other downstairs rooms. There is evidence this room had earlier been two rooms with the south part being the original kitchen. There is a back door with matching windows on either side that are typical backdoor in style and design. They are still intact and were used to exit the sunroom in to the kitchen/porch. This room is on the northeast corner of the house. There is built-in shelving on the south wall of this room.

The main stairway leading from the foyer to the second floor leaves the foyer toward the south. There is a landing that turns the stairway north to the second floor. There is an ornate window on the landing looking south. The second floor has a main hallway at the end of the stairway that runs west to east. This hall has the narrow clear oak flooring. There are six rooms and two baths on the second floor. Both bathrooms have original mosaic style tile floors. There are two rooms overlooking the porch on the west end of the upstairs. The room on the southwest corner of the upstairs appears to be a storage type room. There are no closets, but two walls of built-in storage. This room has old style plank flooring and two double-hung windows, one on the west

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 7 Page 4

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

and one on the south. The other room on the west end overlooking the porch is directly above the west living room wall. The west wall of this room has a bay-bow curved wall with three matching double-hung windows. This wall matches exactly the wall on the west end of the living room directly below. This bedroom has closet space and direct access to a bathroom. There are two double-hung windows on the north wall. This bedroom has the narrow oak flooring.

Heading east down the hall the next room on the right is a bedroom. This room is directly east of the main stairway. The south wall of this bedroom is directly above the original dining room and has the same bay-bow curved south wall with three matching double-hung windows. There is closet space and this room has direct access to another bathroom. It also has the narrow clear oak flooring. Across the hallway is what is termed the master bedroom. It is the largest of the upstairs rooms and has a fireplace with original tile hearth. This room has closet space and direct access to the bathroom on the north side of the main hall. There are 7 double-hung windows, four facing the north and three facing west, toward the roof of the north side of the wrap around porch. The floors are the narrow oak type.

Further east in the main hall is a door on the south that is the second floor entrance of the servants back stairway. Directly across the hall from this door is another door leading to the remainder of the back stairway leading from there to the third floor.

The remaining two rooms are on the east and northeast of the house. The east room at the end of the hall is another bedroom, but could be used for any general purpose. It has closet space and narrow oak flooring. It has three double-hung windows on the east side, overlooking the kitchen at the rear of the house. The last remaining upstairs room is entered from the entered from the previously described east bedroom. This appears to be converted veranda that has been enclosed. This room has no closet space or storage space. It is on the northeast corner of the house and has six double-hung windows, three facing north and three facing east. This room has the narrow oak flooring.

The third floor has five rooms. The upstairs is not finished in the same style as the two other floors of the house. The ceiling lines follow the rooflines. The room at the top of the stairs has no windows. The floors are plank and the wood trim appears to be made of the same wood as the floors. The electrical wiring on the ceilings is on the outside. There are gas light fixtures on the walls. Some of the walls have wallpaper and there is a full bath with a claw foot tub. Except for the windowless room at the top of the stairs each room has a door with working transom. There is minimal closet and storage space. Four of the rooms have gable contour ceilings with a set of three windows. The window sets match. Each window set includes a double-hung window with smaller decorative windows on each side.

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Alfred Landon House

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

Summary

The house at 300 South Eighth is *not* being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because it has been relocated. The relocation was necessary to avoid demolition. Although the surrounding neighborhood context is different, the house is now situated just three blocks from its original location. Aside from the altered surrounding context, this Queen Anne style residence constructed in 1901 retains much of its architectural integrity with many original and historic features intact and only minor changes.

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 8 Page 6

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Alfred Landon House (c. 1901) is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion B for its association with businessman and politician Alfred M. Landon and Criterion C for its significance as a good example of a large turn-of-the-century Queen Anne residence. Landon, a Republican, served as the Governor of Kansas from 1932 to 1936 and ran as the Republican nominee for President of the United States against incumbent Democrat Franklin Roosevelt in 1936. He owned the house from 1915 to 1937. Local contractor and master builder A. E. Todd constructed the three-story house in 1901, and went on to build more than 25 residences in Independence.¹

Landon's father John purchased the house from the original owner, J. T. Davis, in 1915 and presented it to his son as a wedding gift. After his campaign for the U.S. presidency, Landon sold his house in Independence to W. F. Gates in 1937. The next documented owners are Cecil and Jo McKenzie, who purchased the property in 1962 and owned the house for many years.

In the summer of 2004 a developer became interested in locating a Walgreen's Pharmacy store in Independence. In June the developer sought to acquire a square block of property in downtown for this construction. This square block included three significant historic buildings, one of which was Landon's former home. Several organizations became involved to try and save the house from demolition including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Kansas State Historical Society, the Kansas Preservation Alliance, the Independence Historic Preservation and Resource Commission, and the City Commission. The home sat within the environs of four National Register listed properties, and therefore the proposed demolition required review by the City and State. State Senator Derek Schmidt offered to head up a team to raise enough money to move the house, purchase a site upon which to place it, and then restore the home. The Independence Historical Museum agreed to become the owner of house. It was relocated to its current site at 300 South Eighth Street on March 7, 2005.

Criterion B: Alfred M. Landon (b. 1887 – d. 1987)

Landon was born at his maternal grandparents' home at West Middlesex, Pennsylvania on September 9, 1887. The family then moved to Elba, Ohio where his father became a superintendent for Union Oil Company. The family then moved to Marietta, Ohio in 1891. Marietta was a pleasant town with an abundance of trees and an atmosphere as much like a traditional New England town as the people could make it. It was in this environment that Landon spent his boyhood years and received his early education.

¹ Some extant Todd-built houses include 510 East Maple (1907); 200 South Fourth (1903); 201 South Fourth (1916); 217 South Fourth (1909); 301 South Fifth (1907).

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Alfred Landon House
Independence, Montgomery County, KS

He shared his father's interest in politics. In 1900 Landon, then 13, accompanied his father to Parkersburg, West Virginia to hear Theodore Roosevelt speak. In 1904 he and his father traveled to St. Louis to attend the international exposition and to listen to William Jennings Bryan speak at the Democratic National Convention. John Landon's independent Republicanism made a deep impression on his son and conditioned many of his political attitudes. In 1900 Alf entered Marietta Academy and graduated in July 1904. In September 1904 he and his family, moved to Independence, Kansas where his father had accepted employment with the Kansas Natural Gas Company. One week after relocating to Independence, Landon left for Lawrence, Kansas to begin his studies at Kansas University. He graduated from Kansas University in 1908 with a law degree and was admitted to the Kansas Bar. To the disappointment of his father, he decided against a law career. He returned to Independence and worked as a bookkeeper for the Independence State Bank and later for the First National Bank. During his three years in the banking industry, Landon invested in several oil-drilling projects.

In 1911 Landon left his job with the First National Bank to become a full-time oilman. A few months later he located a good drilling site in Oklahoma between Nowata and Bartlesville. He beat other developers to this spot and leased 160 acres of land owned by a Native American, and struck oil. Landon was officially in the oil business. Like most independent oil producers, he conducted his business mostly through personal contacts; enlisting partners, hiring contractors for drilling, sometimes raising money from creditors, and arranging for the piping of his oil to market by the big pipeline companies.

Politics were never far from Landon. His father was active in local and state politics. He was chosen as a delegate to the third district convention in Kansas and was endorsed as delegate-at-large from Kansas to the Republican National Convention. The Landons were active in the beginnings of the Progressive Party in Kansas, especially in Montgomery County and Independence. In September of 1912 Landon became the Progressive Party chairman in Montgomery County, Kansas. Alf worked hard for the Progressive Party. He rang doorbells, made telephone calls, organized meetings, brought in political speakers, distributed campaign posters and literature and other duties as required. Landon escorted Victor Murdock, Progressive nominee for senator, and Henry J. Allen, Progressive nominee for Governor, around Independence when they came to campaign. He also arranged to have the state's Progressive national committeeman, William Allen White, in Independence for the final rally of the 1914 campaign. These events were no small accomplishment for a twenty-seven-year-old politician. The Kansas Progressives had run their first and last campaign, and in 1916 they followed Theodore Roosevelt back into the Republican Party. The Progressives in Kansas continued to be a force in Kansas Republican politics. The Progressive defeat in 1914 was the beginning of Landon's political career in Kansas. He went on to rise in prominence within the Progressive faction, and on to political prominence in the state and the nation.

Landon married Margaret Fleming from Oil City, Pennsylvania in January of 1915. She was the daughter of William Fleming, president of Ohio Oil Company, a Standard Oil subsidiary.

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Alfred Landon House
Independence, Montgomery County, KS

Landon's father purchased as a wedding gift, the house at 300 West Maple in Independence, Kansas, the same house that is the subject of this narrative. A son was born in 1916 and lived a very short time. A second child, Peggy, was born in 1917. In June of 1918 Landon's wife suddenly died of meningitis. At this point in his life, Landon made a decision to enter the military that was engaged in World War I. He arranged for the care of his small daughter, and on October 21, 1918 he was received into the armed forces as a first lieutenant in the chemical warfare service and was sent to Camp Humphreys, Virginia, for training. On November 11, 1918 three weeks later, the armistice was signed. Landon was honorably discharged, and on December the 9th he returned to the big house at 300 West Maple in Independence.

The postwar years were financially good for the Landon family. He joined in the exploration of the greatest oil venture in southeast Kansas, the Coleman strike, whose leasing spread over several thousand acres in Montgomery, Chautauqua, and Wilson counties. Later he spread out over the state, leasing lands in Barber, Butler, Cowley, Elk, McPherson, Rice, and Seward counties. During this period, Landon became modestly wealthy. In his rough leather jacket, battered hat, and tie, he became quite well known, as oilman and as a politician to hundreds of farmers, businessmen, editors, and oilmen throughout southeastern Kansas. Becoming acquainted with these people, he was in a good position to combine business, politics, and pleasure. He earned a reputation for asking questions and listening attentively to the answers. This habit made him friends, and he learned early the importance of being a good listener.

Henry J. Allen was elected Governor of Kansas in November of 1918. Landon became a member of the new governor's "kitchen cabinet" and spent a lot of time in Governor Allen's office. His friendship was cultivated because he could be counted on to provide information accurately and to give opinions honestly. In June 1922 Landon was asked to serve as Governor Allen's executive secretary and he accepted. However, three months later he resigned being bored with the job and tired of his political cronies' constant bickering. He then devoted his time to his business and private life. In 1924 he returned to politics helping Clyde Reed seek the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Continuing in the progressive mode, Landon worked hard for Reed, but to no avail. Reed was defeated by conservative Ben Paulen.

Between 1924 and 1927 Landon stayed out of the political limelight. He worked behind the scenes to develop alliances and relationships. His focus was to stop the fragmentation of the progressive wing of the Republican Party. In September 1927 Landon accepted Clyde Reed's invitation to manage his campaign for the nomination for governor. The job of managing the Reed campaign was not easy. Eventually there were four additional candidates seeking the Republican gubernatorial nomination. However, on August 7, 1928 Reed won the Republican primary election for governor, and later became Governor of Kansas.

The Kansas Republican Party realized Landon's abilities and qualities. On August 28, 1928, the Kansas Republican Party council met. Landon was unanimously elected state chairman of the Kansas Republican Party and became the youngest person ever elected to that position. Landon

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Alfred Landon House
Independence, Montgomery County, KS

continued to serve Governor Reed and managed his campaign during the 1930 election. Governor Reed lost the nomination. Landon had risen to prominence rapidly in 1928 and had fallen from it very quickly in 1930. To most observers, he was politically dead. It was logical to conclude that a campaign manager who could not win re-nomination for his governor would not be in great demand. That was not to be the case.

During this period, Landon met Miss Theo Cobb, the daughter of a Topeka banker and they were married in January of 1930. Alf and Theo had two children. Nancy Jo Landon was born on July 26, 1932. She grew up to become a US Senator from Kansas. John Cobb Landon was born in 1933.

After Governor Reed's defeat in 1930, Landon spent the next year working through the political system to stabilize the oil industry. Landon's fight for stabilization of the oil industry was the key to his political future. Without the oil crusade, he probably would not have sought the governorship in 1932 and 1934, and the presidential nomination in 1936. Oil made possible his business fortune and his political fame.

Landon believed the Kansas Republicans realized that party unity could bring them political success in 1932. He positioned himself as promoting harmony within the Republican ranks. He had let it be known that he was willing to run for governor, although he was not eager to do so. Landon wrote to his oil partner, A. H. Black:

"My feet have not been itching to get into the kind of a campaign that next year promises to be. I have not run after the nomination, and on the other hand I have not run away from it."

Landon felt "there are lots worse things than taking a licking and one of them is to run away from a fight because it is hard".

Landon announced his candidacy for governor on January 20, 1932. He won the primary by an overwhelming margin. He carried 94 of the 105 counties in Kansas. Landon won the election with 34.8% of the votes defeating the incumbent Harry Woodring and independent candidate John Brinkley. Landon was one of four Republican governors elected that year.

During Landon's rise in political prominence in Kansas and on the national scene, he lived in the house at 300 East Maple Street in Independence. He lived there when he was elected Governor of Kansas in 1932. Because of John and Alf Landon's involvement in Montgomery County and Kansas state politics, former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) visited Independence in 1910 and again in 1912. President William Howard Taft (1909-1913) also visited Independence in 1911. These visits to Independence by two former U.S. Presidents were due in part to the prominence of the Landons in Kansas politics. The Kansas Republican convention took place in Independence on May 7 and 8, 1912. The local lore says that President Roosevelt stayed in the

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 8 Page 10

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

Landon home on the first visit in 1910, and that President Taft stayed there also. Roosevelt's friend Gifford Pinchot, a Yale University professor who served as the nation's first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service from 1905-1910, came to Independence in 1912 and gave a speech. Landon provided the publicity for this speech.

During his first term as governor, Landon had lowered taxes, reorganized the state government, fought successfully for farm and unemployment relief, started a water conservation program, reformed the finances of local government, forced utility rates down, overcome the a banking scandal, met oil crises, and proved to be a cooperator with the federal New Deal programs.

Landon announced on May 29, 1934 that he would run for re-election. He won the Republican primary for governor by nearly 4 to 1. It was the largest total primary vote in Kansas history to that time. The vote was 233,956 for Landon to 58,938 for opposing candidate John Brinkley. Landon won his second term as Governor of Kansas, defeating Omar Ketchum by a margin of 62,153 out of total of 781,907 votes cast. Landon was the ONLY Republican governor reelected in the Democratic landslide of 1934.

In December of 1934 and early in 1935 events were quietly developing that would elevate Landon to a national figure. Landon-for-President clubs were being organized. The national press was seeking him out for his views on national and world affairs. State leaders from across the country sought ways to meet the Kansas Governor. He was asked to address party meetings in several states.

Landon's campaign strategy developed slowly. He had little money and therefore could not travel the country. But he had very strong press ties and contacts and determined he could move his campaign forward over the press wires and that people would come to see him.

William Randolph Hearst's vast newspaper empire announced support for the Landon campaign in September of 1936. One of the goals of the Hearst support system was to make the Alf Landon family "the best-loved family in America". Charges were made that Landon was a puppet for Hearst. But a careful study of Landon's ideas would show that most of his ideas were formed before he met Hearst.

On June 11, 1936, sometime after 9 p.m. in Cleveland, Ohio, Landon was nominated as the Republican candidate for the President of the United States. Landon did not attend the convention. He communicated with the convention by telegraph. His absence did not stop the 16,000 in attendance from staging a 30-minute demonstration in support of Landon. The final delegate count was 984 in favor and 19 opposed. The next day, June 12, Frank Knox, publisher and part owner of the *Chicago Daily News*, was selected unanimously as the Vice Presidential candidate.

Landon did not make an official acceptance speech until July 23, 1936, in Topeka. The *Wichita Beacon* called it "Kansas' Most Glorious Day". Cecil B. De Mille, the maker of movie

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 8 Page 11

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

spectaculars, was on of those that worked out the pageantry for the event. Included were 2-hour parade, choirs, floats, soldiers, cheering groups, bands, drum corps, prairie schooners, stagecoaches, and cowboys and Indians. All of this was watched by thousands in 100-degree heat. The evening activities were attended by 100,000 people on the statehouse grounds.

Landon did most of his campaigning from the back of a train dubbed the Sunflower Special. He had a special podium built that was positioned at the end of the caboose. The train would come to a town and stop and he would give a speech from the back of the train behind his podium.

At midnight before Election Day, Governor and Mrs. Landon boarded a train for Independence where they were to vote. The day before over hundreds of people from Independence and surrounding area drove their cars and two special trains, to Topeka. On the return trip at midnight there were about 2000 people in Independence to greet the Governor and his family. The Landon family spent the night in their home at 300 East Maple Street. After voting the next day, the Landons boarded the Santa Fe and returned to Topeka.

Landon lost to Franklin Roosevelt by the margin of 27,478,945 to 16,674,665. In the electoral count, it was 532 for Roosevelt and 8 for Landon. Landon carried only Maine and Vermont. He continued to serve his term as Governor of Kansas. He never again ran for public office, but remained available for consultation and advice on political matters. He returned to working his oil and gas business.

The Landon family sold the home at 300 East Maple Street in Independence on the 27th of April 1937. This ended a 22-year ownership of this house, including 17 years at the primary residence, 1915 thru 1932. Landon had many important and memorable experiences while living in this house. His first wife and his first-born son both died while living there. He laid the groundwork for a being a presidential nominee while living there. He made a modest fortune in the oil business while living in this house. His business and his political activities caused him to be away from Independence a considerable amount of time. He had a method of letting Independence know when he was in town. The house was situated on a corner. Near the corner in the front yard, he had buried a length of pipe in the ground. The top of the pipe was visible. When he was in town he would place an American flag mounted on a flagpole in the pipe. When the towns' people saw the flag flying they knew that Landon was home.

Post-Landon Years

After his campaign for the U.S. presidency, Landon sold his house in Independence to W. F. Gates in 1937. The next documented owners are Cecil and Jo McKenzie, who purchased the property in 1962 and owned the house for many years. In the summer of 2004 a developer became interested locating a Walgreen's Pharmacy store in Independence. In June the developer sought to acquire a square block of property in downtown for this construction. This square block included three significant historic buildings, one of which was the former home of Alf Landon. Several organizations became involved to try and save the Landon House from demolition including the

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Alfred Landon House

Section number 8 Page 12

Independence, Montgomery County, KS

National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Kansas State Historical Society, the Kansas Preservation Alliance, the Independence Historic Preservation and Resource Commission, and the City Commission. The home sat within the environs of four National Register listed properties, and therefore required review by the City and State.

State Senator Derek Schmidt offered to head up a team to raise enough money to move the house, purchase a site upon which to place it, and then restore the home. The Independence Historical Museum agreed to become the owner of house. It was relocated to its current site at 300 South Eighth Street on March 7, 2005.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Landon house is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style, which was popular in the United States between 1880 and 1910.² Its irregular roofline, asymmetrical appearance and clapboard or shingle walls are all significant elements of the style. The form is further supported by a characteristic interior with interconnected spaces and a prominent entry hall. The house includes a gable roof with lower cross gables, a one-story front porch that spans two elevations, and grouped porch supports, elements commonly found on Queen Anne houses.³ Its interior also reflects the Queen Anne style as having a free floor plan arranged around a reception area that also serves as a stair hall. Main public rooms open to each other by means of broad sliding pocket doors. Interiors also typically contain an abundance of elaborate wood trim.⁴ The first story of the house circulates freely and features pocket doors separating the entry from the living room.

Summary

The house located at 300 South Eighth Street in Independence is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion B for its associations with prominent Kansas businessman and politician Alfred M. Landon. This house served as Landon's primary residence during his politically active years, including his years as the Governor of Kansas and during his campaign for President of the United States. Built by local contractor A.E. Todd in 1901, this house is also being nominated under Criterion C as a good local example of turn-of-the-century Queen Anne residential architecture.

² Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 263-266.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder, CO: The Westview Press, 2000), 242.

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 13

Alfred Landon House
Independence, Montgomery County, KS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, Kenneth. *A Guide to Historic Homes in Independence, Kansas*. Independence, KS: Privately published, 1993.

Independence Daily Reporter. 7 March 2005; 8 March 2005.

McCoy, Donald R. *Landon of Kansas*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Montgomery County Register of Deeds.

Palmer, Frederick. *This Man Landon: The Record and Career of Governor Alfred M. Landon of Kansas*. New York: Dodd and Mead, 1936.

South Kansas Tribune (Independence).

Register of Historic Kansas Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 & Photos Page 14 Alfred Landon House
Independence, Montgomery County, KS

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is located at 300 South Eighth Street in Independence, Kansas. This is a corner lot and there is one building situated on the property.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire lot on which the Landon House is situated. The house was moved from 300 East Maple Street to this location (300 South Eighth Street) in 2005.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

1. Landon House
2. Independence, Montgomery County, KS
3. Photographer: Sarah J. Martin
4. 17 October 2006
5. Digital photographs on file at the Kansas State Historical Society

- Photo #1: West (front) elevation, view from the west
- Photo #2: Northeast corner, view from the northeast
- Photo #3: South elevation, view from the south
- Photo #4: West elevation, close-up of gables, view from the west
- Photo #5: North elevation, close-up of porch, view from the north
- Photo #6: Grouping of porch columns, view from the southeast
- Photo #7: Main staircase at front entrance
- Photo #8: First floor light fixture
- Photo #9: Second floor bedroom, view from the east
- Photo #10: Second floor hallway, view from the west
- Photo #11: Servants' back staircase leading up to the second floor
- Photo #12: Servants' back staircase leading up to the third floor
- Photo #13: Third floor hallway leading to servants' quarters